

Purposeful Living Units Serve (P.L.U.S.) Wabash Valley Correctional Facility

The Purposeful Living Units Serve (PLUS) program is a faith and character-based community that encourages offenders to choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior by providing a focus on spiritual and character development, community service, and a curriculum that teaches pro-social skills for living as law-abiding citizens. The PLUS program is a sixteen (16) month program that involves a core curriculum and each participant must complete 320 hours of community service. The average Wabash Valley Correctional Facility (WVCF) PLUS offender averages over 800 hours of community service! The Wabash Valley Correctional Facility received the "Partner in Progress" award from Lt. Governor Becky Skillman in 2010. This is the first time a correctional facility has been the recipient of this prestigious honor in recognition of Wabash PLUS contributions to the surrounding community.

The Wabash Valley Correctional Facility PLUS unit is nationally known for its quilting! In 2006 PLUS embarked on a unique community service project in memory of fallen heroes. The unit has been making quilts for families of Indiana soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each quilt includes the soldier's name, unit, date of birth and date of passing. The branch of service insignia is also included on the memorial quilt. Over 134 quilts have been distributed to families around the state. PLUS has expanded their quilting skills to donate specialty quilts to local schools, organizations and churches for fundraising events, quilts for the homeless, specialty quilts for government dignities, a quilt for Miss America 2010, and **twice** has won "honorable mention" at the Indiana State Fair for quilt entries. In all, PLUS has donated over 2,853 quilts to date. All material is donated or purchased through fundraisers. PLUS is a self sustaining program and receives no State or Federal money.

Wabash Valley Correctional Facility PLUS offenders and staff are very community service orientated. Since the program began in late 2005, our PLUS participants have donated over \$26,445.00 from food sales and quilt raffles to a wide variety of charitable causes throughout the Wabash Valley. We have an on-going relationship with Big Brothers/Sisters of the Wabash Valley, veteran homes, and various homeless shelters throughout the region. These are only a few of the partnerships PLUS has formed with the community.

Wabash Valley Correctional Facility PLUS has graduated 262 offenders since 2006. In January of 2010, our facility was selected to be a test site for the PLUS Graduate program. Currently, we have 62 PLUS Graduate offenders continuing their focus on community and "giving back" as they prepare to re-enter society. In 2011, the Indiana Legislature voted to grant a six (6) month time cut for offenders who graduate PLUS. These offenders must meet all requirements and criteria to be granted this time cut.

PLUS can always use your help. The PLUS program requires a group of volunteers from a variety of faith and denominational backgrounds. The volunteers' role is to provide the PLUS offenders a resource where personal growth issues are explored through the concepts of faith and character-based teachings. This source of encouragement and constructive direction is more consistent with the goal of rehabilitation. It allows PLUS offenders to address issues that need attention before he returns to society and it allows this to happen with a person who has a track record of success in the free society.

If you would like to be a PLUS Volunteer at the Wabash Valley Correctional Facility please contact Community Services Director Michele Lincoln at 812-338-5050, extension 3115 or email milcoln@idoc.in.gov.

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